

City Council

Department Description

Columbus City Council is the chief policy-making arm of city government, empowered by City Charter to exercise legislative control over city expenditures. Citizens elect the seven-member council at-large to four-year terms of office. Primary responsibilities include the adoption of the annual operating and capital budgets, authorizing certain contracts, and enacting amendments to the Columbus City Code. In addition to fiscal control and regulatory authority, Council establishes land use policy through its zoning powers.

The Council works closely with the administrative branch of city government in the formation of policy, including work force and economic development initiatives, tax incentives, annexation and land use, and efforts to serve Columbus families. As well, City Council initiates and facilitates on-going cooperative efforts with other governments, the business community and other institutions to ensure a safe environment and a high quality of life for all Columbus citizens.

The legislative research office and legislative aides provide Council advice and information regarding budgetary, neighborhood, community, and economic development matters.

Council appoints the City Clerk, who maintains the journal of Council activity, codifying general ordinances and maintaining custody of deeds, abstracts, and titles owned by the city. Council also appoints the City Treasurer, whose duties include the investment of all city funds.

Department Mission

To carry out the duties and responsibilities as prescribed by the Columbus City Charter and the Columbus City Codes to ensure that Columbus is a great place for all its citizens.

Strategic Priorities for 2003

Council's strategic priorities for 2003 focus on three areas: continued belt tightening to maintain fiscal health, job creation efforts, and working to better serve the needs of Columbus families. Council established the Joint-Labor Management Committee in 2002 to begin to address the city's on-going budget challenge. It will continue to encourage both the administration and labor to actively participate in this effort, with the purpose of identifying and implementing creative solutions to improve operations and more effectively provide service to the public, while reducing costs.

Promote the development of high-tech jobs within the City of Columbus through the Star Initiative, a collaborative effort including various Ohio State University organizations, Battelle, Columbus Technology Leadership Council, and others. Partners are actively working to craft city policies to encourage high-tech development.

Respond to issues and concerns facing Columbus families as raised by the Commission on Families. The commission, convened by City Council in the spring of 2002, includes members from both the public and non-profit sectors. Charged with researching and documenting the true status of families in the city, the commission has worked to identify issues facing families, and provide recommendations regarding how the community can best support a safe and healthy environment for all families.

Continue progress in identifying and meeting the needs of Columbus youth through the Columbus Youth Commission, convened in late 2002.

To improve the legislative process with the roll out of a web-based writing and tracking system. This action extends the operational improvements and cost savings Council produced in 2002 by ending hard copy printing of the City Bulletin in favor of an electronic version. That action eliminated \$100,000 in annual printing costs and enhanced public access to city records. Other operational cost-saving actions such as the elimination of one full-time and one part-time position carry forward into 2003, as well as efforts to reduce office expenses, providing another \$100,000 in savings.

Work with the administration to create greater downtown and neighborhood housing opportunities as a primary tool to secure downtown stability. City assistance may include various incentives for developers, such as tax abatements, or targeted use of city capital monies to leverage private investments.

Continue to explore methods to extend health care coverage to more uninsured, persons, such as a household healthcare benefits program. Such "last resort" coverage would complement on-going efforts in the community, such as the Access Health Care initiative being coordinated by the Columbus Medical Association, to expand medical care to the community's most needy population.

2003 Budget Issues

The recommended general fund budget for City Council includes a contract with the Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce of \$114,852 and with the Franklin County Public Defender's Office at \$1,138,000. In addition, the 2003 combined hotel/motel tax and general fund allocation for the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau is budgeted at \$3,944,722.

CITY COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUMMARY					
DIVISION SUMMARY	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
City Council	\$ 10,811,161	\$ 11,624,162	\$ 11,600,788	\$ 11,014,840	\$ 11,431,518
TOTAL	\$ 10,811,161	\$ 11,624,162	\$ 11,600,788	\$ 11,014,840	\$ 11,431,518

DIVISION SUMMARY BY CHARACTER					
CITY COUNCIL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
Personnel	\$ 1,854,254	\$ 2,216,600	\$ 2,389,814	\$ 2,310,603	\$ 2,453,751
Materials & Supplies	44,390	35,372	30,700	40,700	31,800
Services	2,263,458	2,474,514	2,120,274	2,084,664	2,106,021
Capital	4,169	-	-	2,925	-
TOTAL	\$ 4,166,271	\$ 4,726,486	\$ 4,540,788	\$ 4,438,892	\$ 4,591,572
CITY COUNCIL HOTEL/MOTEL EXPENDITURES SUMMARY	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
Services	\$ 6,644,889	\$ 6,897,676	\$ 7,060,000	\$ 6,575,948	\$ 6,839,946
TOTAL	\$ 6,644,889	\$ 6,897,676	\$ 7,060,000	\$ 6,575,948	\$ 6,839,946

DEPARTMENT SUMMARY BY FUND					
FUND SUMMARY	1999 Actual	2000 Actual	2001 Appropriated	2002 Estimated	2003 Proposed
General	\$ 4,166,271	\$ 4,726,486	\$ 4,540,788	\$ 4,438,892	\$ 4,591,572
Hotel/Motel Tax	6,644,889	6,897,676	7,060,000	6,575,948	6,839,946
TOTAL	\$ 10,811,161	\$ 11,624,162	\$ 11,600,788	\$ 11,014,840	\$ 11,431,518

DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL SUMMARY

DIVISION	FT/PT*	2000 Actual	2001 Actual	2002 Authorized	2003 Authorized
City Council	FT	33	33	32	32
	PT	2	2	3	3
TOTAL		35	35	35	35

*FT=Full-Time PT=Part-Time

PROGRAM SUMMARY - CITY COUNCIL

Program/Activity	Description	2002 Budgeted			2003 Budgeted		
		FT	PT	Proposed	FT	PT	Proposed
Administration	The city's legislative power is vested in the City Council whose seven members are elected for four year terms on an at-large basis. City Council approves all appropriations and laws for Columbus. In addition to its role as policy-making body, City Council provides a public forum for the discussion of issues by the citizenry.	32	3	\$ 4,540,788	32	3	\$ 4,591,572
Hotel/Motel Tax	The tax provides support for the Greater Columbus Convention and Visitors Bureau and for expanding cultural services.	-	-	7,060,000	-	-	6,839,946
TOTAL		32	3	\$ 11,600,788	32	3	\$ 11,431,518

